

## Reminiscent by kidbyers

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**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

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**Summary:**

A Hawkins highschool dance, years after the snowball of '84.

The party reminisces about how they've changed since the snowball, and Will and Mike share a moment together.

## Reminiscent

### Author's Note:

Hey guys, I hope you enjoy this fic as much as the first one I wrote !

(also ao3 sucks and won't let me indent so until that's figured out and i edit it, it'll just have to be like this for now? sorry!)

It was another Hawkins high school dance, but there was something awkward creeping up everyone's spines. It was a bit too reminiscent of the snowball of 84'. Probably bringing up the sweet memories of middle school bliss before high school. But the tragic reminders of the awkward stages of early teenhood were most definitely affecting everyone.

Mike didn't shuffle under his weight, while Will had been the complete opposite in the moment. He was a bit unnerved, his clothes fitting a bit too loosely. He was self conscious, but eased up when he saw a familiar face as Mike walked in, a bit more relaxed than expected.

The party had been standing around and talking for a while, waiting for everyone to arrive. Will had been leaning against the bleachers, vaguely nodding over to Max and Lucas whenever he was roped into a bit of their conversation. He was a bit spaced out, for reasons the party didn't really know about. But seeing Mike tonight, had really got him stuck in his thoughts.

Dustin and El went off to fetch drinks for their friends, so it was just Max, Lucas, and Will to greet Mike.

"Just like old times... it feels like." Mike said, sitting down on the bleachers next to Will. Compared to how Mike had looked years back at the snowball, to Will he had seemed more refined and relaxed sitting here. Maybe Mike had finally gotten used to the dance atmosphere. Will surely hadn't.

"And looks like." Max said, turning to look at the decor. "I swear they reused the decorations." Well, she wasn't wrong. The old hawkins gymnasium was decorated with similar colored streamers and lights as the snowball once had. Sure it was around december, but that didn't mean reusing decorations was any shortcut.

El returned shortly, holding two cups in her hands. "Dustin will be back with the rest." She gave a small smile to Mike and Lucas as she passed a red solo cup to Max, who gave El a quick squeeze on the shoulder as a "thank you". Her other cup was passed over to Will, and he thanked her promptly as he grabbed the cup from her hand.

Will took a single sip before looking between the cup El had given Max and the one she'd given to him. "Aren't you getting one for yourself?"

Before Will had even realized, Max had passed her drink over to El, who'd already taken a few sips.

"We're sharing." Max replied, moving closer to Eleven and placing a hand around her shoulder.

No later than a few seconds after Max had spoken, Dustin returned with the rest of the requested drinks. "Hey Mike." He said, putting a cup into Mike's hands.

"Thanks Dustin."

"No problem." He passed another drink to Lucas, and kept one for himself. The party stood in comfortable silence as they drank their drinks. Nothing felt uncomfortable, but nobody had a real reason to engage in a heavy conversation since they'd seen one another at school just a few hours before the dance.

"I wonder what music they'll play this year." Max stated, looking towards the group. "Cause if they play something cheesy I might just have to slow dance with my ears covered." She gestured as an example, turning as she had one ear covered with her hand, and her other arm stretched out as she held an invisible waist.

"Ooh I'll be the invisible partner!" Dustin laughed. Over the years,

he'd gotten over his unrequited crush on Max and they'd gotten closer as friends because of it. Now they'd just joked around together, usually ganging up on Lucas as a result.

Max chuckled as she shook her head. "In your dreams buddy. El is my date tonight."

El softened as Max spoke, leaning into the redheads shoulder. "Sorry Dustin." El gave a heartwarming smile to her curly haired friend.

"Go dance you two. None of us want to third wheel tonight." Dustin shooed the two girls off to the dance floor, being as sincere as possible. The whole party was happy about Max and Eleven's new relationship, but third wheeling was uncomfortable enough to dull the atmosphere.

Dustin took a seat on the bleachers next to Lucas, and they began a quiet conversation. Mainly focused on the remembrance of Max, and the shared pining for the redhead that Dustin and Lucas had shared.

"It's really interesting to see now. It's not that she didn't like me, or didn't like boys or whatever. She also likes girls, and she's just... Max." He trailed off. "It's just we didn't end up working out. I'm glad we're still really close as friends now. She seems... happier." Lucas smiled fondly, looking over at Dustin.

"Well she never liked me." Dustin explained. "But it doesn't bother me really. I mean, when I used to have feelings for her, sure it bothered me. But now, it doesn't bother me at all."

Their conversation blended in the background as Will continued to zone in and out. He wasn't too focused on anything in particular. The dance atmosphere alone was enough for him to want to avoid focusing on anything.

Mike's voice was enough for him to shift back into reality. "I know I mentioned it earlier, but tonight really has made me think."

Confused, Will asked, "About the snowball?"

"Yeah." Mike looked down at his cup, tapping the side of it with his fingers. It wasn't as much of a nervous thing as just something that

helped Mike ease himself. Just as tapping his foot, or a pencil on a desk.

He tried to clarify. "I mean. It's like what Lucas and Dustin have been saying. But it's me with El?" Mike gestured to the two girls on the dance floor, arms around another as they smiled brightly. "We weren't meant for each other either. I'm kinda glad in a way? Both of us have figured ourselves out and she seems really happy with Max. Plus El and I are still really good friends now too. But that night? I still wish instead of dancing with El... I wasn't dancing with her."

Will nodded along. "It's like when I danced with that girl. I understand. I just wish it didn't happen. No offense to her or anything really. It's just, you know.." It was unspoken now, because after he came out as gay to the party, suddenly everything made sense. Mike had understood why Will was so hesitant when that girl asked him to dance. But another part of Will knew he was uncomfortable dancing was because he'd wished it would've been with Mike.

"I wish things would've been different that night." Mike said quietly. Will silently agreed.

In the silence, he shuffled again. His empty cup was set right next to Will's hand, and he grabbed it, accidentally brushing against Will's hand in the process. "Sorry." He gave a warm smile to Will as he stood up. "I'm gonna get some more punch."

Will sat, taking another sip of his drink as he looked out at the crowd of fellow highschoolers. It was funny to think about how everyone had changed since middle school, and frankly a bit embarrassing. Mostly endearing though, he thought as he watched Max and El come back over to the group of boys.

"What're you buffoons up to now?" Lucas joked, giving a smile as the two girls sat down next to him.

Max had a small frown on her face, "I think El might've hurt her foot. Some dumbass stepped on her foot and she tripped a little."

"You mean you stepped on her?" Lucas tested the waters with another joke.

Fortunately, Max cracked a tiny grin. As much as she wanted to, she couldn't resist a good joke from him. "Oh be quiet Lucas. It was some stupid guy."

It was now El's turn to frown, as she insisted. "Max, I'm fine. I think a slow song is starting soon. I still want to dance with you."

"Well can you stand on it El?" Dustin asked, grabbing the girl's hand and helping her steady herself as she stood up again. She winced a bit as she applied pressure, and took a seat back down on the bleachers.

"I'm sorry Max." Eleven frowned, "I knew how much you wanted to have a good time."

Max assured her that it was okay, and gave her girlfriend a soft kiss on the hand. "It's alright."

"I mean.. I can drive you home if you'd like. Max can come with." Lucas suggested, turning towards Mike, who had just gotten back from refilling his drink.

His brows furrowed, "What'd I miss?"

"El hurt her foot and I'm gonna drive her back home with Max. And Dustin? You can tag along too if you'd like." Lucas caught Mike up, and Dustin nodded in reply.

"Bummer. I'm gonna miss you guys." Will said, looking over at Max and Eleven. He gave El a soft pat on the back as the group got up, saying their goodbyes and heading out the doors of the gymnasium.

It was just the two of them, Mike and Will sitting on the bleachers together. It wasn't what they thought the night was going to end up like, to say the least.

"Now I'm curious as to what song they're gonna play." Will said, and as if on cue, a very slow lovesong started to play.

Mike laughed, "It's cheesy." And he took another sip of his drink. It really felt strange for the whole party not to be there. He enjoyed being alone around Will, that wasn't the problem.

"Maybe we should just head out? Plus it's a little stuffy." Will suggested, taking a last swig of his punch before setting the empty cup back down. "Maybe just some air would be nice." As much as Will would've enjoyed dancing there on the dancefloor, he just didn't think the chances of that would be very likely to happen. It was even cheesy and lame to admit to himself, but he really wouldn't have minded if Mike had just asked him.

Mike nodded in agreement, walking over to the doors of the gym, and holding it open for Will.

Outside it was a bit chillier than expected, and in the parking lot, the music was even loud enough to hear faintly outside. Will found himself humming the melody as he pulled his shirt fabric closer to his skin. He didn't realize the air would be so chilly that night.

The two of them leaned against the wall outside the gym, listening to the music together.

"It's stupid." Mike said, out of the blue.

"The music?" Will questioned, looking at the boy next to him. He had stopped humming too.

"No, not the music. It's stupidly perfect actually." He took a breathy laugh, "It's me. It's stupid I'm doing this at all but.. I just have to tell you."

Will didn't say anything, he just let Mike talk. He had no clue where this was headed.

"You know how I said that I wished that night was different?" Mike, seemingly too nervous to make eye contact with Will. But now he managed to look him in the eye, if only for a few seconds at a time.

"Yeah?" Will spoke quietly, as almost that the mix of the cold air and Mike's words were enough to keep him silent.

The music swelled in the background. "I wanted to dance with you. At the snowball." Mike's eyes met with Will's. "And when I kissed El too... I wished it'd been with you. Ever since that night you were tied up in the cabin and I thought you were a goner. And I looked you in

the eyes and talked to you about how meeting you in kindergarten was the best thing i've ever done. Hell, I don't even know if you remember that. Both times." He laughed nervously, taking in another cold breath. "When we met, and when I told you that, because of the mind flayer and everything."

He looked over at Will, "You probably think I'm so stupid now." Then Mike stopped talking and turned away, and they stood in almost silence.

If anything it was the complete opposite of stupid. Will could barely believe he even heard Mike's confession.

"You're not stupid Mike." Will said, meeting Mike's hesitant gaze. He leaned closer to Mike, whose face was turning slightly red from the cold. Will, close enough now to see Mike's freckles. Maybe the light the streetlights outside made Mike look extremely handsome to Will in the moment, or maybe his feelings for Mike that had been buried deep were now rising in his chest. Or maybe he was just stupid, for really wanting to kiss Mike right then. If the adrenaline of being that close to him made him feel this way, then he'd happily be stupid.

Mike closed the space between their lips, his hand moving to the back of Will's neck, pulling himself closer to Will. The whistling of the wind nearly drowned out the muffled sounds of the slow song inside the gymnasium. Neither of the two could care, as their red noses brushed against another as their lips pulled apart. Inches apart again, all Will could take in was the warmth he felt from Mike. Will smiled brightly, and Mike's expression matched.

Mike wrapped an arm around Will's neck, and Will pulled himself closer to him. The two embraced as the song came to an end.

"That was so cheesy, Byers." Mike teased, pulling away just enough that their noses weren't touching.

"Excuse me for wanting to kiss you. I promise I'll never do it again." A grin spread across his face, leaning in to kiss Mike softly. The two joked around for a few moments after, giddy and stupidly in awe of one another.



After the two pulled away, Mike's hand dropped to grab Will's hand. It felt warm to the touch, and just as comforting as expected. Their fingers intertwined, and Will felt himself smiling again.

"We should probably go back to see the others." Will said, pulling Jonathan's set of keys from his pocket, letting go of Mike's hand. "He let me borrow it for tonight."

"Do you think they'll all be at your house?" Mike wondered, walking over to Jonathan's car and opening the door, getting into the passenger side.

"Considering Hopper's probably there with El and the fact everyone tagged along? I wouldn't doubt that my mom stayed up to give Max a ride home." He turned the key and slammed the door shut. He pulled out of the parking lot, and out onto the street. Hopefully everyone else's night turned out as good as his had.